

Northeast Ohio Regional Highlights 2012

Creating Jobs and Promoting Economic Development

Celebrating New Jobs and Investment at Brooklyn's Hugo Boss Plant

Sen. Brown has worked with Hugo Boss and its workers for several years to preserve the company's Cleveland-area jobs. In March, following a private meeting with Hugo Boss workers and executives, Sen. Brown announced that the company and its employees have ratified a new, three-year labor contract that will preserve the company's more than 150 manufacturing jobs in the Cleveland area.

The agreement also provides for a new "Made to Order" clothing production for North America this fall. If successful, this new production work could bring additional jobs to the Brooklyn facility. The new, three-year labor contract coincides with Hugo Boss's investment in the new Boss Black collection "Made to Order" program, which will allow customers to design their own suiting and shirting, as well as ties and pocket squares in select Hugo Boss store locations within the U.S. market. All "Made to Order" pieces will be manufactured in the Cleveland-area facility.

Less than three years ago, the Cleveland facility teetered on the brink of closure. Hugo Boss and Workers United agreed to a new contract that has resulted in a renewed life for the facility. According to Hugo Boss, since 2010, the Cleveland facility has achieved efficiency and quality ratings that are unparalleled in the industry. Sen. Brown worked closely with Workers United and Hugo Boss to keep the plant open. In July 2010, Sen. Brown joined Hugo Boss workers to celebrate the 'first suit off the line' at the Brooklyn plant, which is the only U.S. suit manufacturing facility of the German company.



First-of-Its-Kind Manufacturing Institute Announced in Youngstown

Youngstown and other cities across Northeast Ohio's Tech Belt make up a critical part of Ohio's manufacturing backbone. In August, Sen. Brown joined senior White House and Administration officials to announce a \$30 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to establish a new, first-of-its-kind manufacturing institute in Youngstown known as the National Additive Manufacturing Innovation Institute (NAMII).

Additive manufacturing technology is a type of 3-D printing where a digital model can be used to make parts and components. The Youngstown-based Institute will be the first pilot of the National Network for Manufacturing Institutes and will solidify Northeast Ohio as a hub for manufacturing innovation and spur economic development.

Bringing Offshore Wind Energy to Lake Erie

Offshore wind has the potential to bring thousands of new jobs to Ohio and the U.S. — and Lake Erie, with its shallow depth and excellent wind resources, is an ideal site to test offshore wind development.

In December, Sen. Brown secured critical Department of Energy (DOE) resources to advance offshore wind development in Lake Erie. The Lake Erie Energy Development Corporation (LEEDCo) will use the \$4 million award to establish an offshore wind demonstration project on Lake Erie, the first project of its kind in the U.S.

These funds mean that LEEDCo is one step closer to making Lake Erie home to the first freshwater, offshore wind development in North America. LEEDCo plans to install nine 3-megawatt direct-drive wind turbines on “ice breaker” monopile foundations designed to reduce ice loading. The project will be installed on Lake Erie, seven miles off the coast of Cleveland.

Sen. Brown has been a longtime advocate of offshore wind energy. He led a letter in May, signed by several members of the Ohio Congressional delegation, supporting LEEDCo’s application for the grant program. Sen. Brown also convened high-level meetings between LEEDCo and DOE and urged the Obama Administration to fund the project.

Federal New Markets Tax Credits Help Promote Economic Development and Create Jobs

The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program, administered by the U.S. Treasury Department, helps attract investment in underserved regions that would otherwise suffer from a lack of financing. In February, Sen. Brown announced that the Summit County Port Authority—now known as the Development Finance Authority of Summit County—was awarded \$20 million through the New Markets Tax Credit program for Fiscal Year 2011. This tax credit will help bring new development to the region. Sen. Brown helped secure the credits by sending a letter to the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund in support of the Summit County Port Authority’s application for the New Markets Tax Credit.

Providing Ohioans with Job Opportunities in Shale Development

Shale development has tremendous potential to bring new economic development and jobs to Ohio. Not only do we have to protect our public safety and health, but we must make sure that these new jobs are going to Ohioans—not out-of-staters. In April, Sen. Brown met with Ohioans at a jobs open house that his office organized with Chesapeake Energy. Held in Canton, the open house attracted more than 1,200 workers. Veterans were encouraged to attend day-long event to learn about and apply for career opportunities in shale development. As a result of Sen. Brown’s efforts, Ohio workers have already been hired and are currently working in shale development careers.

Protecting Northeast Ohio Steel Jobs with Strong “Buy America” Requirements

Whenever possible, American tax dollars should be used to bolster American manufacturing. In March, Sen. Brown joined executives from ArcelorMittal, Cliffs Natural Resources, and the United Steelworkers to provide an update on ArcelorMittal’s hiring of 150 new workers and discuss the need to protect Ohio’s steel jobs with strong “Buy America” requirements. In recent years, the U.S. government has relaxed regulations that now allow the importation of foreign-



made steel for use in armor plate and transit infrastructure. Such a practice hurts American steel producers and puts our defense supply chain and national security at risk. Sen. Brown recently authored legislation to require that military steel be 100 percent made in America.

In July, as a result of Sen. Brown's efforts, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced that it would restore a 35-year rule requiring that steel purchased by the U.S. military be 100 percent domestically produced. The rule, originally overturned in 2009, requires armor plate steel to be both melted and finished in the U.S. Several Ohio companies, including Cleveland's ArcelorMittal and Cliffs Natural Resources and Marion's Nucor, are involved producing Armor plate steel. Sen. Brown applauded the move by DoD, which protects thousands of Ohio jobs.

Service Training Opportunities for Older, Unemployed, or Low-Income Ohioans in Akron

As Ohio's population ages and the costs of living increase, communities need to provide training services for unemployed, low-income, or aging adults who are seeking additional employment to help make ends meet. Programs, like those sponsored by Mature Services Inc., can help connect these individuals with the skills and employment opportunities they need.

In July, Sen. Brown announced that Mature Services Inc., a non-profit organization assisting senior citizens in Akron, will receive \$3,804,007 in new federal resources to provide community service training for older, unemployed, low-income Ohioans for the US Department of Labor's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). SCSEP is a community service and work-based program that provides subsidized, part-time training for low-income adults, 55 or older, who have poor employment prospects.

Developing and Commercializing Fuel Cells in North Canton

By developing and commercializing fuel cells in Ohio, we can create jobs while helping to reduce our reliance on foreign oil and continue to position our state as the Silicon Valley for clean energy manufacturing. In June, Sen. Brown applauded the news that LG invested \$45 million to acquire a 51 percent share in Rolls-Royce Fuel Cell Systems, located in North Canton. The company will now be known as LG Fuel Cell Systems, Inc. According to the companies, LG Fuel Cell Systems Inc. will continue to further the research, development, testing, and commercialization of solid oxide fuel cell technology aimed at megawatt-scale distributed power generation for industrial, commercial, and electric utility markets and applications.

Developing Clean Coal Technologies at Babcock & Wilcox in Barberton

Ohio has a rich history in the production and development of a diversity of energy technologies ranging from coal, oil, and natural gas to solar, wind, and fuel cells. Developing new advanced

energy technologies is something Ohio has done and continues to do well. This type of cutting-edge research and development can help make Ohio the center of 21st-century energy and economic development.

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Energy Technology Laboratory awarded new federal resources to Babcock & Wilcox in Barberton to develop the next generation of clean coal technologies by reducing the costs of carbon capture when coal is burned. Babcock & Wilcox will develop advanced oxy-combustion technologies for carbon capture that can be applied to new, retrofitted, or repowered coal-based power plants.

Creating Jobs by Making Products Using Materials Made from Agricultural Products

Agriculture remains Ohio's number one industry—and manufacturing is one of the state's most important industries. Partnering these two industries could be a boon for Ohio. In a visit to Cleveland's Sherwin-Williams in March, Sen. Brown and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack highlighted a new jobs initiative that would give federal procurement preference to companies that make bio-based products, which are composed wholly or significantly of biological ingredients. At Sherwin-Williams, which makes paint made with soybean oil, Sen. Brown and Sec. Vilsack outlined how increasing bio-based procurement could mean new manufacturing and agricultural jobs in Ohio. Sen. Brown also discussed his "Grow it Here, Make it Here" initiative, which would increase access to capital for bio-based manufacturers, improve marketing of bio-based products, and further the commercialization of new agricultural innovations. Ohio is already home to nearly 150 companies that use agricultural crops to make new products ranging from natural cleaners to bio-based paint and soy ink and toner.

Promoting Tourism and Boosting Economic Development in Northeast Ohio

Ohio has a strong tourism industry, but there is more to be done to make sure visitors know about all of Ohio's world-class attractions. During a working conference call in July, Sen. Brown discussed strategies for boosting Ohio's tourism industry with representatives from the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, the Football Hall of Fame in Canton, the Cleveland Orchestra, and other Ohio stakeholders. They were also joined by Brand USA, a new public-private entity that seeks to bring more visitors to the United States and to create economic activity and jobs in Ohio and across the nation.

Boosting Ohio's Aerospace Exports

An aggressive American export strategy is key to Ohio's economic recovery. Sen. Brown is one of five Senators serving on the President's Export Council and is working to help more Ohio manufacturers export their products, improving their competitiveness and creating jobs. In September, Sen. Brown joined the Ohio Aerospace Institute (OAI) in Cleveland to announce a first-of-its-kind project funded in part by federal resources and in part by OAI that will help boost Ohio's aerospace



exports by connecting Ohio's aerospace manufacturing companies with international aerospace manufacturers seeking components and services made in the U.S.

OAI will receive nearly \$166,000 from the International Trade Administration's Market Development Cooperator Program (MDCP) and is the first exclusively-aerospace industry recipient of such an award. According to OAI, its MDCP project will increase aerospace exports from Ohio-based small and mid-size qualifying aerospace manufacturers to Canada, Europe, Brazil, and India by an estimated \$90 million over the next three years. OAI anticipates its project will create 720 aerospace manufacturing jobs and more than 1,100 indirect jobs in Ohio and throughout the United States. Ohio-based manufacturing companies will benefit from this partnership by gaining access to training sessions, supplier summits and workshops, and trade missions.

Federal Resources for New Entrepreneurs Opportunity Fund in Ashtabula

The New Entrepreneurs Opportunity Fund, a community development organization in Ashtabula County, is a critical resource for maintaining and growing Ohio's economy. Sen. Brown was pleased to announce in August that the New Entrepreneurs Opportunity Fund was awarded \$92,037 through a competitive grant from the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund. The CDFI Fund, administered by the U.S. Treasury Department, helps rural and low-income communities that lack access to affordable financial products and services. These resources will help build upon Northeast Ohio's existing strengths, while bringing new development to the region.

Strengthening Trade Enforcement to Protect Northeast Ohio Jobs

Fighting Chinese Currency Manipulation to Protect Northeast Ohio Jobs

From steel to auto parts, the evidence is clear that when industry and the government get tough on trade and enforce existing laws, Ohio's workers and businesses win. Ohio's workers and businesses can compete with anyone when trade laws, including addressing China's currency manipulation, are strengthened and enforced.

Sen. Brown visited Wheatland Tube in Warren in October to meet with workers and release a new report outlining the importance of trade law enforcement to steel and manufacturing jobs in the Mahoning Valley and across Northeast Ohio.

Sen. Brown renewed his call to Speaker John Boehner to schedule a vote in the House of Representatives on his Senate-passed, bipartisan *Currency Exchange Rate Oversight Reform Act*, which would punish China when it cheats trade laws by manipulating its currency. The legislation, which could create 2 million American jobs at no



cost to taxpayers, cleared the Senate in October 2011 by a wide bipartisan margin, but has stalled in the House since then. Nearly 260 current House members—including 80 Republicans—voted for a similar version of the bill in 2010.

Protecting Northeast Ohio Steel Workers from Unfair Chinese Subsidies and Dumping

Ohio manufacturers can compete with anyone, but they deserve access to a level playing field. China and other foreign competitors have been flooding American markets with cheaply produced goods, which have hurt American manufacturers of steel wheels, tapered roller bearings, and steel pipes.

American manufacturers of tapered roller bearings face cheap imports from China sold at prices below market value. The federal government imposes antidumping duties to level the playing field, but the duties must be reviewed every five years. As the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) conducted this five-year review on antidumping duties on imports of tapered roller bearings, Sen. Brown testified before the ITC in June on behalf of the Timken Company and United Steelworkers, who make tapered roller bearings in Canton. In his testimony, Sen. Brown encouraged the ITC to maintain the antidumping duties to help preserve jobs at Timken. The ITC voted to uphold antidumping duties on imports of tapered roller bearings.

Ohio manufacturers of steel pipes support hundreds of good-paying Ohio jobs that are vulnerable to unfair trade practices carried out by the Chinese, including currency manipulation and duty evasion. In December, Sens. Brown and Portman urged the Commerce Department to maintain antidumping duties and countervailing duties on Chinese steel pipe imports. The pipes are used for domestic oil exploration, particularly in the shale industry, and are produced in Ohio by U.S. Steel in Lorain, V&M STAR in Youngstown, Wheatland Tube in Warren, and JMC Steel in Brookfield.

V&M Star VP Testifies on Need for Strong Trade Law Enforcement

Enforcing trade laws is critical for the growth and success of domestic manufacturing and steel production. To represent Northeast Ohio's concerns about trade issues in Washington, D.C., Sen. Brown nominated Doug Polk, Vice President for Industry Affairs at V&M Star, to join job creators from around the U.S. to testify before the Senate Democratic Steering Committee.

Strong trade law enforcement has been key to V&M Star's success in Ohio. Countries like China have shown that they will stop at nothing to lure away American manufacturing jobs. Without an aggressive approach to addressing unfair subsidies and trade practices carried out by the Chinese government, hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs—like those at V&M Star—could be jeopardized.

The rapidly-developing shale industry in Ohio has significantly increased demand for the rolled steel pipes manufactured by V&M Star. V&M Star has committed nearly \$1 billion in investments to Ohio, in part to be in close proximity to the developing Marcellus and Utica shale regions; the company has also benefited from strong trade enforcement and a \$20 million award from the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* to build a new facility in the Mahoning Valley.

More than 1,200 Northeast Ohioans Eligible for Worker Adjustment Assistance

Ohioans who work hard and play by the rules should not be left to struggle when they lose their job through no fault of their own. The federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose work hours and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. The program extends benefits such as training for employment in another job or career, income support, job search allowances, and relocation allowances. Qualified workers may quickly return to employment through a combination of these services.

Over the past year, Sen. Brown has announced TAA eligibility to 125 workers at Diebold Incorporated in North Canton; approximately 25 workers at The Taylor Chair Company in Bedford; more than 1,000 workers at RG Steel, which had Ohio operations in Yorkville, Mingo Junction, Martin's Ferry, and Warren; approximately 100 workers at Newell Rubbermaid in Wooster; and 36 workers at General Electric Ohio Lamp in Warren. These resources will help ensure that these displaced workers have the financial support and training opportunities to get a fresh start.

Making Clothing in America

After the news that the U.S. Olympic team uniforms, designed by American designer Ralph Lauren, were actually made in China, Sen. Brown introduced a new "Buy America" plan through the *Wear American Act of 2012*. The bill would require that all textile and apparel articles acquired for use by federal agencies be manufactured from articles, materials, or supplies entirely grown, produced, or manufactured in the United States. Sen. Brown believes that whenever possible, American tax dollars should be used to bolster American manufacturing, including textile and apparel manufacturing.

During a visit to Youngstown Nation, a store that specializes in American- and Ohio-made products, Sen. Brown discussed his legislation alongside proprietor Phil Kidd and Bob Hodge of Hodge Embroidery and Screenprinting, who discussed his experiences as Ohio small business owner competing in the apparel industry.

Helping Northeast Ohio Small Businesses Grow and Add Jobs

Celebrating a Record Year of Lending in Ohio by the Small Business Administration



Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and access to capital is vital for them. In January, Sen. Brown and Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Karen Mills visited Constantino's Market in Cleveland to celebrate the company's expansion and highlight the record year of SBA lending in Ohio. Constantino's Market used SBA financing to expand one store and open a new store in Cleveland. The expansion and opening are expected to support more than 30 jobs and create more than 50 jobs at the two locations.

In Fiscal Year 2011, the SBA approved 3,228 loans amounting to nearly \$760 million for Ohio small businesses. In Fiscal Years 2009-2011, the Northern District of the SBA saw more than a 65 percent increase in the volume of SBA loans to area small businesses.

To aid these efforts, Sen. Brown was instrumental in passing the *Small Business Jobs and Credit Act*, which expanded the SBA provisions in the Recovery Act that helped small business owners access more private capital. Sen. Brown also fought for increased loan limits in the SBA's most popular loan programs. Endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce and National Federation of Independent Businesses (NFIB), the *Small Business Jobs and Credit Act* also provided \$55 million to the Ohio Department of Development under the State Small Business Credit Initiative.

Since 2009, Sen. Brown's office has conducted more than 30 small business workshops throughout Ohio. These workshops provided Ohio small businesses with important information on SBA loan programs, resources to help increase export sales, tax incentives to help invest and hire workers, and federal procurement resources.

Growing and Incubating New Small Businesses Across Northeast Ohio

Business incubators help to reduce the risks entrepreneurs face, provide critical resources for young companies in need, and help create jobs in Ohio. In March, Sen. Brown celebrated a new partnership between the Youngstown Business Incubators and TECHudson designed to bolster small business development. The signing of this unprecedented agreement will help bolster Ohio's role as a national leader in the successful development and launch of new small businesses.

Additionally, in April, Sen. Brown visited Ferrante Winery in Geneva to discuss a proposed business incubator that would create jobs and provide support to start-up wineries in Northeast Ohio, as well as boost culinary tourism in and around Ashtabula County. "Pairings Ohio" hopes to break ground by 2013 but has been tied to donations and fundraisers in order to do so. Business incubators can provide office space, training, advice, and other resources to fledgling business enterprises, which would help Pairings move toward their goals faster.



Sen. Brown's *Business Incubator Promotion Act* would make more communities in Ohio eligible to receive funds that support business incubators through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). Incubator support has already created hundreds of thousands of jobs by providing start-up companies with services that help turn innovative ideas into viable businesses.

Fostering High-Tech Small Business Innovation

With the help of the U.S. Department of Energy's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant program, innovators and entrepreneurs at companies across Ohio are helping to develop

clean energy technology, create life-saving medical devices, and take other technological strides that will change and improve American lives. In June, Sen. Brown announced that Euclid Techlabs, LLC in Solon will receive nearly \$4 million through the SBIR program.

SBIR is a competitive program that encourages American-owned and independently operated small businesses to reach their technological potential by awarding them crucial funds to aid in a technology's startup and development stages. Together with the Small Business Technical Transfer (STTR) program, the SBIR program has delivered more than \$233 million to more than 240 Ohio small businesses to develop innovative technologies and grow and create jobs over the past three decades.

Helping Mahoning Valley Small Businesses Increase Exports

As a member of President Obama's Export Council, Sen. Brown is committed to helping Ohio businesses access new markets. Sen. Brown's office has held multiple seminars throughout the state to help connect Ohio businesses with federal resources to increase their export sales. In June, Sen. Brown attended the first-of-its-kind "TechBelt Export Summit." Sen. Brown's office helped organize the event with the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce. Fred Hochberg, Chairman of the Export-Import Bank, and Francisco Sanchez, Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade, also participated in the event to highlight federal resources to help businesses in the Mahoning Valley access new markets.



In 2009 and 2010, businesses in the Youngstown metropolitan area led the nation in export growth. This spring, Sen. Brown led the charge in the Senate to reauthorize the Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank. More than 140 Ohio businesses have received financing through the Export-Import Bank, since 2009, at no cost to U.S. taxpayers. In May, the Senate approved the reauthorization of the Ex-Im Bank President Obama later signed the bill into law.

Medina Small Business Owner Victoria Tifft is National Small Business Person of the Year

Sen. Brown celebrated the news that Hinckley small business owner Victoria Tifft was recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as the "National Small Business Person of the Year." Victoria's work is worthy of recognition not only because her company ClinicalRM helps develop potentially life-saving treatments for infectious diseases, but because it has served as an exemplary model of small business growth and job creation.

According to the SBA, Victoria learned about the devastating living conditions endured by people living in Third World nations when she contracted malaria while serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in the West African nation of Togo. After her recovery, she returned home to the U.S. determined to spend her life working to provide medical solutions for the global community. In 1992, Victoria established ClinicalRM, a Contract Research Organization (CRO) that supports development of FDA-regulated vaccines, pharmaceuticals, and medical devices for

government and commercial customers. ClinicalRM helped create—and today manages—the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research’s Clinical Trials Center. The Center develops vaccines for infectious diseases such as malaria, and E. coli. Employing three people in 1994, the company maintains domestic and international operations today with a staff of 331. Annual revenues have increased from \$17 million in 2007 to \$40 million in 2010.

Building Northeast Ohio’s Infrastructure and Transportation

New Federal Resources for Northeast Ohio’s Regional Airports

Northeast Ohio is home to several outstanding regional airports. In 2012, Sen. Brown announced more than \$7 million in federal resources from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for Ohio airports, including the Medina Municipal Airport, Akron-Canton Regional Airport, Galion Municipal Airport, Geauga County Airport, Lorain County Regional Airport, Kent State University Airport, and the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport. All funds will go to rehabilitating and maintaining airport infrastructure including runways, apron pavement, and taxiways.

Investing in Northeast Ohio’s Public Transportation

Public transportation is critical for economic revitalization and job creation. Thanks to federal investments, a new Cedar-University Rapid Transit Authority (RTA) is being built in Cleveland. Sen. Brown applauded the project, which will be able to serve more Ohioans and increase the value of the University Circle area for small business owners, young people, and homeowners. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Transit Administration provided \$14.2 million in federal funds, including a \$10.5 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant, to support the project. Upgrades include reconstruction, relocation, and modernization of the rail station, bus terminal, and associated roadways.

In addition, Sen. Brown announced that the Summit County Metro Regional Transit Authority (MRTA) will receive \$270,000 in new federal resources to expand and improve public transportation options. This grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation will expand transportation choices, improve transit connections, and provide job access between Merriman Valley, downtown Akron, and south Akron.

Giving Northeast Ohioans Better Access to Passenger Rail Service

Relocating Amtrak service in Elyria would help continue downtown Elyria’s revitalization, create a one-stop center for transit opportunities, and help to fully utilize the newly-renovated Lorain County Transit Center. In December, Sen. Brown urged Amtrak and the Norfolk Southern Corporation, the owner of the railroad tracks in Lorain County, to relocate Amtrak service from its existing location in Elyria to the newly-renovated Lorain County Transit Center (LCTC). In letters sent to the companies, Sen. Brown urged Amtrak to use existing funds—currently slated to make the current Elyria stop compliant with the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA)—to move Amtrak service to the LCTC, which is already ADA compliant. While the existing Amtrak Elyria stop has limited space and few amenities, the LCTC was recently renovated and also offers Greyhound bus and Lorain County Transit Authority bus services.

Supporting Servicemembers, Veterans, and Law Enforcement

Protecting the Officers Who Protect Us: Creating a National “Blue Alert” System

Violence against our law enforcement officers is, unfortunately, an all-too-common occurrence. Every year across America, dozens of law enforcement officers are killed in the line of duty, with thousands more injured or assaulted while on the job. In January, Sen. Brown joined Mahoning Valley law enforcement leaders to outline legislation that would create a national “Blue Alert” system aimed at apprehending criminals who injure or kill law enforcement officers serving in the line of duty. A national Blue Alert system would help track down those who assault law enforcement officers—even if they attempt to flee to a neighboring state. In a state like Ohio, that borders five other states, a national Blue Alert system could mean the difference between capturing an assailant and having him escape. Sen. Brown first announced his support for the *National Blue Act of 2011* during Police Week in May 2011.

Ensuring Northeast Ohio Firefighters Are Prepared and Safe

Our first responders put their lives on the line every day across Ohio. Federal resources ensure that firefighters across Northeast Ohio have the resources they need to perform their jobs safely. Sen. Brown announced in February that nearly \$1.9 million was awarded to fire departments in Ashtabula, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Richland, Stark, Trumbull, and Tuscarawas Counties for operations and safety and for vehicle acquisition by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) program. AFG awards grants to departments and EMS organizations that are not directly affiliated with a hospital in an effort to enhance their ability to protect the health and safety of the public.

Additionally, FEMA’s Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program helps fire departments to increase the number of trained firefighters available in their communities. The Wadsworth, Cuyahoga Falls, Willoughby, Mansfield, North Olmsted, Akron, Bazetta, Austintown, Jefferson, Massillon, Bedford, Wooster Township, and Akron Fire Departments as well as the Eastern Knox County Joint Fire District all received SAFER grants in 2012 to hire firefighters, purchase or update equipment, or improve firefighter preparedness, safety, and response.

Preserving Mansfield's Air National Guard and Youngstown’s Air Reserve

Sen. Brown has led the efforts to save Mansfield's 179th Airlift Wing C-27J aircraft program from being eliminated at the Mansfield Air National Guard Base (ANGB) and to preserve the current number of C-130 planes and personnel at the Youngstown Air Reserve Station (YARS).

In December, Sen. Brown announced a “strategic pause” that halted the proposed changes to the C-27J program at the Mansfield ANGB and to the C-130 planes and personnel at YARS. Despite



these efforts, the Air Force will have great leeway in determining the posture and position of air craft at the Mansfield ANGB and YARS. Sen. Brown will continue to advocate for the bases and the men and women in Ohio's Air Guard and Air Force reserves.



When the U.S. Department of Defense announced that it would retire the C-27J aircraft program, Sen. Brown voiced his opposition to the elimination and called for a follow-on mission for the Mansfield base. Sen. Brown has consistently stood against proposals to eliminate the C-27J program, which would affect hundreds of National Guard positions in Mansfield. In March, he visited Mansfield to stand with the Ohio Air National Guard and the greater

Mansfield community in opposition to the proposed elimination of the C-27J program. He also wrote to Secretary of Defense Panetta and met with Air Force Secretary Donnelly, urging them to reconsider their decision to eliminate the Guard planes. The “strategic pause” in the budget deal passed by Congress in September will preserve the C-27J flying mission at the Mansfield ANGB for at least six months.

The men and women of the 910th Airlift Wing at YARS carry out a unique mission by serving as the sole fixed-wing aerial spray unit in the Department of Defense. Throughout the appropriations process, Sen. Brown proudly voted to keep intact the 12 planes and corresponding personnel at YARS. The “strategic pause” Fiscal Year 2013 Defense Authorization (NDAA) bill passed by Congress in December will preserve the current number of C-130 planes and personnel at the Youngstown Air Reserve Station for at least six months. Sen. Brown will continue to fight to ensure that the men and women at the Mansfield ANGB and YARS and their vital missions, are protected in the months and years to come.

Connecting Ohio Veterans with New Employment Opportunities

Ohio is home to more than 890,000 veterans, making our state the nation's sixth-largest population of veterans. Despite their service, too many veterans struggle to find work when their military service ends. As a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Sen. Brown is committed to ensuring veterans have the tools they need to find employment.

Sen. Brown was an original cosponsor of the *VOW to Hire Heroes Act*, a veterans jobs law enacted in November that created the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP). VRAP is a joint Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Labor training initiative that provides unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 the opportunity to pursue training for new careers in high demand occupations. VRAP offers up to 12 months of training assistance to unemployed veterans. Between July 1, 2012, and March 31, 2014, VRAP will provide up to 99,000 participants with retraining assistance.

Beginning in July, Sen. Brown traveled across Ohio to encourage eligible Ohio veterans to apply for VRAP. In Youngstown and Cleveland, Sen. Brown joined veterans who will train for new careers at Ohio schools to encourage more Ohio veterans to apply for VRAP assistance.

Helping Veterans Apply Their Military Skills to the Civilian Job Market



Service members acquire skills in the military that can translate easily to the civilian workforce. Sen. Brown is fighting to help veterans cut through red tape and roadblocks when they try to apply their military skills and training to the civilian job market. In a visit to the Port of Cleveland in October, Sen. Brown—joined by a veteran from a Cleveland trucking company—outlined a new law that eliminates a critical hurdle for active duty military, military reserves, or National Guard service members seeking a commercial driver’s license (CDL).

Since many military personnel are stationed away from their home state of record, current law makes it difficult for them to apply for the license, even though they may have the adequate training to qualify for the license. The *Military CDL Act*, which Sen. Brown sponsored, eliminates an existing law that only allows service members to obtain a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) in their home state of record.

Improving Education for Veterans on GI Bill Benefits

Thanks to the Post-9/11 GI Bill, military servicemembers and veterans are able to take advantage of tuition assistance benefits—but many for-profit colleges are attempting to take advantage of men and women in uniform by flooding them with deceptive and aggressive marketing and recruitment pitches. In April, Sen. Brown joined Brad Sonenstein, a U.S. Air Force veteran from Mayfield Heights, to outline the *GI Bill Consumer Awareness Act of 2012*, which would help veterans make informed decisions about their educational future and crack down on misleading solicitation campaigns carried out by these schools. The bill would provide veterans with more and better information about their benefits, would require all institutions of higher education to disclose critical information about the average student loan debt and job placement data, and would crack down on misleading recruitment tactics.

Fighting Veteran Homelessness

Too many of our service men and women return home without homes to go to. Ohio has a large population of veterans, which makes it crucial to ensure that resources, such as shelters, are available to veterans in need. Providing resources to veterans who have put their lives on the line will ensure that they receive the support they need to live in a stable environment and find work once they return home.

Sen. Brown announced new federal resources to provide critical support for homeless veterans in Northeast Ohio. The Family and Community Services, Inc. of Portage County received resources to provide temporary housing for homeless veterans and provide a daily average of 20 beds for homeless veterans through a “Transition in Place” housing model which promotes increased housing stabilization. Mental Health Services for Homeless Persons, Inc. in Cuyahoga County received resources to provide supportive services to low-income veteran families living in or transitioning to permanent housing. The organization plans to serve approximately 400 participant households in Cuyahoga County.

In March, Sen. Brown met with Chanel Curry, a formerly homeless and current U.S. Army Reservist now living in Cleveland, who also testified before the Veterans Affairs Committee regarding veterans’ homelessness. The hearing was titled “Ending Homelessness Among Veterans: VA’s Progress on its 5 Year Plan.”

Presenting Medals to Northeast Ohio Veterans

The men and women that serve our country in uniform deserve our gratitude. As a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Sen. Brown fights every day to ensure that Ohio’s veterans receive their hard-earned benefits and recognition.

In February, coinciding with the first day of service at the new Parma VA Outpatient Clinic, Sen. Brown presented 18 overdue and replacement medals to three Northeast Ohio veterans and their family members. Medals awarded included one Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts.

In July, Sen. Brown presented U.S. Army Private First Class Donald Arnold, a Cleveland-area World War II veteran, with an overdue Purple Heart and eight other replacement medals. In August, prior to an Akron Aeros game at Canal Park, representatives from Sen. Brown’s office presented overdue or replacement medals to 13 Medina, Summit, Wayne, Lake, and Trumbull County veterans or their family members for distinctions earned during World War II, the Vietnam War, and for service in the Persian Gulf, Bosnia, and Afghanistan.

In August, as Cleveland’s Navy Week kicked off, Sen. Brown presented an Operation Iraqi Freedom Navy veteran and a World War II Navy veteran several medals earned in combat. Sen. Brown worked with the National Personnel Records Center and the United States Navy Personnel Command to obtain the medals, and he presented the medals to Hospital Corpsman Third Class (HM3) Michael Dobec and Motor Machinist’s Mate First Class (MOMM1c) James Burton Tedrick in a ceremony aboard the USS COD.





In December, Sen. Brown presented 13 medals—including a Bronze Star—to Vietnam Veteran and South Euclid resident Larry Patterson. Sgt. Patterson was born in Jackson, Mississippi and raised in Cleveland. He joined the Army in 1967 and spent 19 months in Vietnam as a radar operator. After being stationed in Korea, Sgt. Patterson returned to California and became an Army recruiter. He later was transferred to Cleveland where he worked as a recruiter until he retired from the Army in 1989. He worked at the Department of Veterans Affairs in the Cleveland Regional

Office for twenty years, first as a veterans' service representative and later as a supervisor.

Mansfield's New VA Clinic to be Named After Local Vietnam Veteran

On the day of the groundbreaking of the new Veteran's Administration Community-Based Outpatient Clinic in Mansfield, the U.S. Senate passed legislation introduced by Sens. Brown and Portman to name the facility after Private First Class David F. Winder. Winder, a Mansfield native and graduate of Malabar High School, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1974 after being mortally wounded while serving as a Medic and attempting to save the lives of his fellow soldiers in the Vietnam War in 1970. The new 25,000 square foot facility that bears his name will replace an existing facility. The outpatient clinic will expand present services to more than 7,000 veterans in the Mansfield area.

Improving Transportation Access for Northeast Ohio Veterans

Whether they need to access services at the local VA or just to get to work, our veterans—like all Ohioans—deserve access to reliable transportation.

In March, Wadsworth resident Carl Harris, a member of the Paralyzed Veterans of America and a Vietnam Veteran, met with Sen. Brown in the nation's capital to discuss efforts to improve transportation options for disabled veterans, veterans' employment and benefits, and other issues. Sen. Brown, a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, helped pass a new law to provide disabled veterans with additional Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Benefits.

In July, Sen. Brown announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Federal Transit Administration awarded \$50,000 to the Stark Area Regional Transit Authority (SARTA) to improve access to transportation options for veterans in Stark County. These new resources will help veterans, active service members, and military families learn about locally-available transportation services.

Supporting NASA Research and Investments

Standing up in Washington for NASA Glenn Research Center and Plum Brook Station

The backbone of NASA is its employees, and Sen. Brown raised concerns that the proposed budget for NASA underfunds its highly-talented researchers and scientists, thereby threatening

the ambitious agenda NASA has planned. At a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing in March, Sen. Brown questioned NASA Administrator Charles F. Bolden over NASA mission and resources decisions that affect Cleveland's NASA Glenn Research Center and its Plum Brook Station in Sandusky. Sen. Brown asked Administrator Bolden how the cuts in NASA's overall budget, including aeronautics, will affect NASA Glenn—a center where aeronautics is a major strength—and about making full use of the facilities at Plum Brook. With NASA seeking the ability to shift funds, Sen. Brown is fighting to ensure that all of NASA's centers are adequately funded and utilized before Congress grants a level of flexibility in how discretionary funds are spent at NASA.

NASA Collaborates with Small and Mid-Sized Manufacturers in Cuyahoga County

Manufacturers are the backbone of Ohio's economy, and connecting them to NASA's technical expertise will help them grow and add jobs. In May, Sen. Brown applauded the news of federal, county, and city investments in nine Cuyahoga County small- and mid-sized manufacturers to do just that. The City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC), and the Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network (MAGNET) announced that these manufacturers will receive assistance from NASA subject matter experts, low-interest-rate loans from the city and county, and professional business development assistance from MAGNET to solve technical challenges they face with a new or existing product. The announcement is part of a new initiative, sponsored by the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy, to lend NASA's technical expertise to local businesses.

Highlighting NASA-Glenn Accomplishments in Cleveland

As the official home of the NASA Glenn Visitor Center, the Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) plays a tremendous role in educating families, students, and tourists to the Cleveland area about the accomplishments of the NASA facility in our own backyard. In June, Sen. Brown announced that new federal funds were awarded to the GLSC to establish a gallery highlighting the work of NASA Glenn's accomplishments in aeronautics and aerospace. In January, Sen. Brown led members of the Ohio delegation on a bipartisan letter to NASA Administrator Charles Bolden requesting the funding for the GLSC.

The funding, which totals \$900,000, is part of 18 projects selected by NASA to receive agency funding in 2012. Sen. Brown was a member of a committee that helped include the funding in the final version of the Fiscal Year 2012 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. According to NASA, proposals were selected through a merit-based, peer-reviewed process from the 63 proposals received.

Supporting Northeast Ohio's Bid to Manage the International Space Station

The contract to manage the International Space Station National Laboratory was awarded in early 2012, but the recipient—Center for Advancement in Science and Space (CASIS)—demonstrated that it is unable to fulfill the type of work necessary to move this important project forward and fulfill NASA's requirements. This spurred Sen. Brown to urge NASA to reconsider the contract award. In light of the resignation of the head of CASIS, which is located at the Kennedy Space Station in Florida, Sen. Brown led members of the Ohio delegation in sending a letter to NASA to encourage the agency to reopen the competition for the contract and to consider the strong application made by Space Laboratory Associates (SLA). SLA is a non-

profit entity established by two of this country's top scientific organizations: the Universities Space Research Association (USRA) and Battelle Memorial Institute.

Previously, Sen. Brown and other members of the Ohio delegation wrote to NASA Administrator Charles Bolden urging him to select Space Laboratory Associates to manage the International Space Station (ISS) National Laboratory. He also wrote to Space Laboratory Associates urging them to locate its proposed headquarters in the Cleveland area. In March 2011, SLA announced that should it win the NASA contract to develop the ISS National Laboratory, northeast Ohio would serve as the project's new home.

Protecting and Supporting Northeast Ohio Consumers and The Middle Class

Protecting Ohio Call Center Jobs



Companies who send call center jobs abroad don't just frustrate their customers, but they also hurt our economy by removing local, good-paying positions. Sen. Brown called attention to the offshoring of call center jobs and the need to keep these jobs here in America and in Ohio by joining call center workers in Cleveland and Niles to outline new legislation he is supporting to help keep call center jobs in the U.S.

The *United States Call Center Worker and Consumer Protection Act of 2012* would require companies to disclose to callers when their calls are transferred abroad, make businesses that move call center jobs overseas ineligible for federal grants or loans, direct the Department of Labor to make a public list of such companies, and require agencies to give preference to US employers that do not appear on this list.

Working to Restore Full Pensions of Delphi Retirees

In 2009, Delphi's bankruptcy cost approximately 19,000 hourly retirees and 20,000 salaried retirees their full pensions after the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) assumed Delphi's pension plans. While three unions representing hourly Delphi retirees had reached contractual agreements with General Motors to ensure full pension protection – negotiated in 1999 and reaffirmed in 2007 – the remaining workers had not. Sen. Brown introduced a bill to help these retirees receive the benefits they have earned through their years of service and hard work. The legislation would restore the full pensions of Delphi retirees and transfer certain proceeds from the sale of government stock of General Motors to a fund at the U.S. Treasury Department that would supplement payment to the Delphi retirees.

Sen. Brown emphasized the employees' innocence in the unfortunate circumstances that befell Delphi, and that the employees' compensation for years of employment and paying into their

pensions are long overdue. The bill needs to be “fast-tracked” to help these families that have been unfairly suffering for too long.

Sen. Brown has been an outspoken advocate on behalf of the retirees since the restructuring of General Motors in 2009. Sen. Brown has also been supportive of the efforts of salaried retirees seeking a proposed settlement, and is working to request that the Obama Administration give that proposal consideration. This bill would not interfere with pending litigation regarding the Delphi pensions, and the legislation is one proposal to ensure that Delphi retirees are fairly compensated.

Taking Action to Protect Pet Owners and Family Pets from Tainted Pet Treats

One of Sen. Brown’s most important jobs as Senator is fulfilling constituent services—from helping Ohioans cut red tape to assisting with government resources. After receiving a letter from an Ohio pet owner describing how her dog fell ill after eating chicken jerky treats that were made in China, Sen. Brown called on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to step up its investigation of the importation of pet food—especially from China, where the possibility of food contamination is high. Sen. Brown urged the FDA to promptly pursue efforts to find the contaminant in these pet treats, ensure that they are pulled from store shelves, and explain its current procedures for notifying consumers and retailers of pet food safety breaches.

At a February news conference at the Cleveland Animal Protective League, Brown was joined by Kevin Thaxton, whose 10 year-old pug, Chancey, passed away unexpectedly after eating chicken jerky pet treats. A Brooklyn Heights woman, Terry Safranek, lost her 9-year-old fox terrier, Samson, in late January. Only after seeing a story on the evening news did she realize that her dog’s death was likely due to his consumption of the same tainted chicken jerky treats.

Sen. Brown has been a strong advocate in the Senate for food safety, and was instrumental in passing the *Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act of 2010*. In recent years, tainted imports from China and other countries have led to the recall of hundreds of thousands of toys, tires, food products, and pet food products, and Sen. Brown has fought to ensure the safety of these products.



Preventing Identity Theft and Scams

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in our country, where increased access to information for consumers also means increased opportunities for criminals—so it’s no wonder that stealing identities to fraudulently obtain tax returns and refunds is turning into an epidemic. In April, as Ohioans began to file their taxes, Sen. Brown joined Michael Bucalo, of Akron, whose identity was used by a criminal to fraudulently obtain Bucalo’s tax return, to raise awareness of identity theft tied to tax returns and help protect Ohioans. Sen. Brown outlined legislation he is supporting – the *Identity Theft and Tax Fraud Prevention Act* – that would

increase penalties for thieves who file false returns and expedite tax returns to Ohioans who have been hit by identity theft. The bill would also require the IRS, Bureau of Prisons, and the Treasury Department to step up identity theft tax fraud prevention programs.

Also in April, Sen. Brown's office and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) hosted free seminars for seniors in Canton and Girard aimed at helping them protect their finances and avoid fraud and scams. The FTC is charged with helping to prevent fraud, deception, and unfair business practices in the marketplace. Representatives from the Consumer Credit Counseling Service also participated.

Cracking Down on Oil Speculation to Help Fight Rising Gas Prices

Following the release of a report in March showing that excessive Wall Street betting adds a 56-cent premium to every gallon of gasoline, Sen. Brown held a news conference in Independence to renew his call to the Obama Administration to crack down on oil speculation. Sen. Brown was joined by Paul Williams, owner of Wooster Motor Ways, along with Daniel Jarvis, an independent trucker and owner of Daniel Jarvis Transport, to outline how unregulated oil speculation leads to rising gas prices and hurts Ohio small businesses, truckers, and consumers alike. Sen. Brown urged the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to enact overdue regulations to protect consumers and small businesses from artificially-inflated gas prices.

Fighting to End the Sports Blackout Rule

Ohio sports fans should be able to watch their home team play—in the stadium they own—on basic television, regardless of whether the game sells out. In January, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced that it is planning to reconsider the Sports Blackout Rule, a 1970s-era regulation that allows sports leagues like the NFL to black out broadcasts of a local sports game when the game does not sell out. At the urging of Sen. Brown, the FCC released a petition urging the agency to open the Sports Blackout Rule for public feedback, the first step in repealing the regulation. Sen. Brown also encouraged Ohio football fans to contact the FCC and let them know how they feel about this outdated regulation, which is unfair to teams, fans, and taxpayers.

In July, the NFL announced the adoption of a new policy that would allow teams to lift local blackouts if at least 85 percent of seats are filled within 72 hours of kickoff. This overturns a longtime requirement that the stadium be filled to capacity before local television blackouts could be lifted. While the NFL's new policy is an important step in addressing the outdated blackout policy, it also included a punitive portion that requires teams to forgo a significant portion of revenue from tickets sold over the 85 percent threshold. Sen. Brown sent a letter to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell expressing concerns and urging the NFL to drop the punitive portion or provide waivers to give teams the flexibility to air games without being financially penalized.

Improving the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad for Northeast Ohio Families

Cuyahoga Valley National Park is one of the nation's most-visited national parks and receives more than 2.8 million recreational visitors each year. Together, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and its scenic railroad represent one of the most popular attractions for nearby residents and for visitors to Northeast Ohio. In January, Sen. Brown announced that the U.S. Federal Transit

Administration awarded \$3.2 million to the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad to rebuild locomotives with energy-efficient technology, replace railroad power cars, and install a pedestrian bridge. These funds will help expand access to the Park's many attractions and ensure that the scenic railroad is safe and modern. Sen. Brown is a longtime supporter of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and has worked to secure federal funding to protect undeveloped land in the park and around the Blossom Music Center.

Sponsoring a Cleveland Student to Serve as Senate Page in Fall 2012

Serving as a U.S. Senate Page is a highly educational and rewarding experience. Pages have the opportunity to see the inner workings of the U.S. Senate up close. A Cleveland Metropolitan School District student spent the fall in Washington as part of the Senate Page Program. Sen. Brown sponsored William Clayton, a Cleveland School of Science and Medicine junior, as one of 30 students from across the United States to serve as a page in the U.S. Senate this fall. William has earned a 4.3 grade point average at the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine, and in addition to excelling academically, he participates in the Law and Leadership Institute and is part of Ohio State University's Young Scholars Program.

The Senate Page Program is a highly competitive program; only a small number of students that apply are accepted. Senate pages live in Page Residence buildings and attend the Senate Page School. Interested students can apply on Sen. Brown's website.

Supporting Social Security, Medicare, and Healthcare

Strengthening Community Health Centers in Northeast Ohio

Community health centers play a vital role in Ohio's health care system, reducing emergency room use, and providing critical services to patients who otherwise would have no access to care.

In June, Sen. Brown announced four awards to expand access to quality health care and create jobs in Northeast Ohio. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded Health Center New Access Point grants to Akron Community Health Resources, Northeast Ohio Neighborhood Health Services in Cleveland, the Free Medical Clinic of Greater Cleveland, and Lorain County Health & Dentistry. The funds will create health center jobs and help more



Ohioans access more affordable preventive care rather than rely on costly emergency room visits – that are often billed to taxpayers. The grants were 4 of 219 awards to community health centers that are expected to create 5,640 jobs and expand care to more than 1.25 million new patients.

In December, Sen. Brown announced that Akron Community Health Resources, Inc., a medical center serving Summit County, received new federal resources to support and develop primary care health services. These resources will help Akron Community Health Resources, Inc. provide affordable and accessible health care to more of Akron's children, seniors, and parents.

New Health Care Equipment at Kent State University Salem Campus

Providing up-to-date equipment and training for future healthcare providers is critical for ensuring student success during and after their education. Grant opportunities for purchasing new equipment and or upgrading old pieces of equipment are needed in colleges and universities around Ohio. Sen. Brown announced that Kent State University's Salem Campus was awarded a \$35,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) to support improved academic instruction for more than 130 students and at least 75 trainees in the next three years, update equipment, and purchase an ultrasound scanner for the new Health and Sciences Wing at the Salem campus.

Advocating for Minority Communities in Northeast Ohio

Moving the Needle Forward on Inclusion in Northeast Ohio

With billions of dollars in new infrastructure and business investment in Northeast Ohio, opportunities are abound for sustained economic growth in our region. It has never been more important than now to ensure the success of small businesses that create local jobs and fuel our economy – particularly minority, women and historically disadvantaged small businesses.

In 2011, Sen. Brown helped to launch the grand opening of Ohio's Minority Business Development Center in Cleveland, Ohio. The Center works with minority entrepreneurs, helping them to gain access to capital and contract opportunities throughout the state. He also launched the Northeast Ohio Economic Inclusion Forum series in Cleveland. The four-part forum connected public, private, and non-profit leaders to leverage existing economic inclusion initiatives.

In June, the fourth and final forum was held at Key Center in Cleveland, and unveiled the regional action plan. The area's most influential leaders came together to leverage existing inclusion efforts while creating a new framework for success that ensures entrepreneurs receive fair access to current procurement opportunities. This series was specifically designed as a collaborative process, whereby nonprofits, business and government leaders were truly engaged to foster more prosperous businesses, create jobs, build thriving Ohio communities, and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Sen. Brown also announced a new partnership between the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the U.S. Black Chamber, Inc. This alliance is aimed at connecting African-American entrepreneurs with the resources needed to grow their businesses and help create new jobs – especially in historically underserved communities. Additionally, Sen. Brown recently launched a new webpage designed specifically to help entrepreneurs in underserved communities connect with the SBA to help entrepreneurs transform their ideas into the next successful small businesses.

Fighting for Voting Rights

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy. But changes to voting laws threatened to suppress voting and make it more difficult for Ohioans to vote, disproportionately hurting minority and low-income populations. To examine these issues, Sen. Brown and Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) held an official hearing of the Senate Judiciary

Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights at the Carl B. Stokes United States Federal Courthouse in May. The hearing examined the impact of Ohio's new voting law, H.B. 194, which would have reduced the number of early voting days from 35 to 17, eliminated voting on the weekend before an election, removed the requirement that poll workers direct voters to their proper precinct and prohibits county boards of elections from mailing unsolicited absentee ballots. U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-Warrensville) provided testimony at the hearing.

Supporters of laws that burden voting, such as reducing the number of early voting days, requiring voters to show restrictive forms of photo identification before voting, and more, argue that such laws will reduce the risk of voter fraud. The overwhelming evidence, however, indicates that voter fraud is virtually non-existent and that these new laws will make it harder for hundreds of thousands of elderly, disabled, minority, young, rural, and low-income Americans to exercise their right to vote.

Sen. Brown will continue to fight against burdens to voting. Ohio deserves better when it comes to protecting our most fundamental constitutional rights.

After battles in the courts over the new voting laws, the 2012 general election was conducted under prior state law, which allowed voting on the weekend before an election.

Strengthening Northeast Ohio Neighborhoods and Families

Fighting the Practice of Bank Walkaways

Following guidance released by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) advising banks on how to abandon homes under foreclosure, Sen. Brown released a letter he sent to the OCC urging stronger standards that will help keep Ohio families in their homes. At the headquarters of the Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland (NHS), Sen. Brown joined Jim Rokakis, director of the Thriving Communities Institute and former Cuyahoga County Treasurer, Lou Tisler, director of NHS, and Cleveland Heights homeowner Jeannette Smith detailing how bank walkaways hurt individual homeowners and entire communities.

Sen. Brown is the author of the *Foreclosure Fraud and Homeowner Abuse Prevention Act of 2011* that would protect homeowners and investors from some of the worst practices of the mortgage servicing industry while encouraging servicers to work with homeowners to find sustainable mortgages.



Strengthening Northeast Ohio's Housing Market

With nearly 25% of Cuyahoga County homeowners underwater on their mortgages, Sen. Brown announced his support for a plan that would improve the housing market by addressing "short sale" home sales. *The Prompt Notification of Short Sales Act* would require banks to respond in a timely manner when prospective buyers are attempting to purchase such homes. Currently, short sales can take several months to a year to process. This legislation would

speed up the short sale process helping prospective homeowners and distressed homeowners alike while helping to rebuild Ohio's neighborhoods.

Joining Sen. Brown at the announcement was Seth Task, a Cleveland area realtor, and Victoria Machor, a Lorain resident who underwent a lengthy short sale process only to see her home sold for far less than the original offer she received.

Eliminating Food Deserts in Ohio Communities

Having access to healthy food in neighborhoods is necessary for overall community health. However, several of Ohio's cities have what are known as "food deserts" or communities that do not have a supermarket or large grocery store within a one-mile radius. Sen. Brown wrote a letter of support to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Highland Square Grocery Store Project, which will construct a grocery store in an area in the City of Akron that was considered a "food desert." The project will receive a Section 108 loan guarantee through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and include the construction of a new grocery store in an area of the city not currently served by a fresh grocer. The store, which will be leased to a locally-owned grocer, will provide fresh food to Highland Square-area residents who currently lack a similar outlet. According to HUD, the City of Akron estimates that the project will create 57 full-time equivalent jobs.

Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank Earns National Award

Too many Ohio families don't know where their next meal will come from. That's why the work of foodbanks across the state is so important. In April, Sen. Brown commended the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank on being named "2012 Member of the Year" by the Feeding America network of foodbanks. More than 200 foodbanks are members of the Feeding America network, and the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank received the honor on April 20 at the group's summit in Detroit.

Supporting Northeast Ohio's Agricultural and Rural Economy

Helping Ashtabula County Businesses and Agricultural Co-Ops Recover from Spring Freeze

Ashtabula County-based small businesses, nonprofits, and agricultural cooperatives were given access to federal resources to offset losses as a result of freezing temperatures that occurred in March and April. Sen. Brown announced in June that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) made federal economic injury disaster loans available for Ashtabula County businesses that faced an adverse economic impact as a result of the excessively cold temperatures. Under this declaration, SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program was made available to eligible farm and nonfarm entities that suffered financial losses as a direct result of the weather.

Supporting Local Farmers and Increasing Access to Locally-Grown, Healthy Foods

Helping Northeast Ohio farmers sell their products directly to consumers can create jobs and increase the availability of nutritious, locally-grown foods to all Ohioans. In July, Sen. Brown and a top official from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service Administrator Audrey Rowe visited the West Side Market in Cleveland to announce new federal resources that makes wireless technology available to help farmers and vendors sell more



produce and goods to consumers. They were joined by a West Side Market vendor, David Divoky, who began accepting EBT payments approximately three months earlier and credit card payments last fall. The use of wireless technology has helped increase the profits of Mr. Divoky's Geauga County farm, Maple Valley Sugarbush & Farm, which he owns with his wife Donna.

In August, Sen. Brown's office co-hosted the statewide "Ohio Grown: Local Food Creating Local Opportunities" forum with USDA, and

OSU Extension to address Ohio's burgeoning local food movement and efforts to shape food policy to benefit local economies. Sen. Brown invited U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Kathleen Merrigan to deliver the keynote address, which focused on increasing access to locally-grown and healthy food. In addition, Oran Hesterman, president and CEO of Fair Food Network, discussed his efforts to promote better food systems that assure equal access to healthy, affordable foods for all income levels.

Growing Rural Businesses

Small businesses are the backbones of local economies, creating up to two-thirds of new jobs across the country. Ensuring that Ohio's rural communities, including the small businesses in these communities, receive the resources and support needed is important for the growth and vitality of Ohio's communities.

Sen. Brown was pleased to announce a \$175,000 US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development grant awarded to Kent State University to fund a center that will provide technical assistance to worker-owned cooperative businesses in Ohio. Examples of technical assistance include help in marketing products, assistance creating new value-added products, and guidance setting up a new manufacturing process. These Rural Development resources will be vital to the growth of Portage County's small businesses.

Listening to Northeast Ohio Farmers

With one in seven Ohio jobs tied to the food and agriculture industry, there is a large, diverse, and vibrant agricultural industry in Ohio. In June, the Senate passed a bipartisan, five-year farm bill, the *Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act*, but the House has failed to act.

Representatives from Sen. Brown's office and a Senior Economist for the Senate Agriculture Committee visited the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) in Wooster to answer questions and discuss the process for the Farm Bill moving forward. The representatives were joined by Steve Maurer, Executive Director of Ohio Farm Service Agency (OFSA), who answered questions on drought and USDA resources. Farmers, primarily dairy farmers, had the opportunity to interact with the Senate representatives and the Executive Director of the OFSA.